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ABSTRACT

Twelve cooperating teachers rated superior by their peers, administrators, and university supervisors were asked to study current literature and reflect and decide upon what makes them so effective in being highly successful with student teachers. These teachers divided the qualities of superior cooperating teachers into two categories: qualities of effective teachers, and clinical qualities specific to working with student teachers. An outline is presented of twenty clinical concepts which encompass six operational areas: (1) role awareness; (2) human relations; (3) management and organization; (4) gradual induction into full responsibility; (5) differential instruction; and (6) evaluation and analysis of teaching. A complete listing is offered of the clinical competencies and behavioral statements describing how each competency is manifested. (JD)

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CLINICAL INDICATORS OF EFFECTIVE COOPERATING TEACHERS

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CLINICAL INDICATORS OF EFFECTIVE COOPERATING TEACHERS

The student teaching period is the main tool in providing preservice students with practice in the professional culture. While most teacher education programs employ a variety of field experiences (both simulated and real laboratory and clinical situations), the final student teaching experience is generally considered to be the principal component of teacher education programs (2). The educational literature is replete with descriptions of various aspects of student teaching, including discussions of specific skill development for student teachers, conceptualization of the roles of the cooperating teacher and university supervisor, goals and objectives, and student teacher formative and summative evaluation. However, the literature is not voluminous when one examines the amount of systematic research conducted on the complex role of the cooperating teacher (2).

Importance of Cooperating Teachers

In examining the literature on student teaching, the one undisputed fact is the cooperating teacher is the key variable in whether or not the student teacher has a successful experience (4, 5, 7). The cooperating teacher serves as a model for the student teacher in the gradual induction to all aspects of teaching. Their influence in orienting the student teacher to the classroom and in bringing the student teacher along to full responsibility in teaching is immeasureable.

Pronouncements emphasizing the importance of the cooperating teacher in any student teaching program are shown time and time

again in the literature. However, classroom teachers should not be given student teachers as a "reward" for years of service or because administrators feel an extra adult in the class will give the classroom teachers free time. Simply stated, to improve the quality of the student teaching experience in our universities and participating school districts, student teaching programs should only use excellent cooperating teachers. Furthermore, there are many excellent teachers who do an outstanding job in the classroom, yet they do not function well with a student teacher. Indeed, effective cooperating teachers possess special qualities. Unfortunately, when a teacher educator, principal, or a public school supervisor asks the question, "What is it exactly about the cooperating teacher that makes a difference?" educational researchers simply do not know and a factual response cannot be given-(3). This lack of a precise statement of qualifications of cooperating teachers is stated often in the literature (3, 5). General characteristics are usually given and could apply to all teachers. Such descriptions give little direction to teacher educators.

It is quite obvious to anyone connected with student teaching that cooperating teachers vary in the way in which they work with student teachers. One group of cooperating teachers perform the minimum requirements satisfactorily. These teachers perform an adequate job with their student teachers. A second group of cooperating teachers exceed the minimum requirements of the job. These teachers are small in number and are characterized by a

high degree of commitment to their roles. Cooperating teachers in this category work harder before school, during school and after school with their student teachers. Clearly, their success with student teachers result from much hard work and careful planning. But in what areas do they work hard and how do they plan with their student teachers? What specific qualities separate the superior cooperating teachers from those who perform only a minimal job?

Cooperating Teacher Competencies

This overriding question was the focal point of a Brazos Valley Cooperative Teacher Education Center Workshop. Twelve cooperating teachers rated superior by their peers, administrators, and university supervisors were the participants. These teachers ranged from kindergarten to high school teachers. Asked to study the current literature and to reflect and decide upon what makes them so effective in being highly successful with student teachers, the cooperating teachers divided the qualities of superior cooperating teachers into two categories: 1) qualities of effective teaching and 2) clinical qualities specific to working with student teachers. These two areas are hierarchical in nature. The 'given' set of qualities are those effective teaching strategies. A cooperating teacher must first be rated an effective teacher at his or her grade level before one can gain expertise in those clinical qualities that are unique to working successfully with student teachers. Delineation of those qualities of effective teaching at each level of instruction was not an objective of this

workshop.

Giant strides are being made in delineating the characteristics of effective instruction (1). The current emphasis in teacher effectiveness research has been in the teaching of didactics, i.e. those school subjects that are taught in a linear fashion and whose content are assessed on standardized tests. The literature on teacher effectiveness is finding its way into preservice teacher education programs and some teacher evaluation and improvement programs are based on this literature, notably the teacher evaluation plans from the state education departments of Georgia and Florida. For example, the "Teacher Performance Assessment Instruments" (TPAI) developed by the Georgia Department of Education assesses how well teachers demonstrate competencies in the areas of "Teaching Plans and Materials", "Classroom Procedures", and "Interpersonal Skills." The competencies within each area relate to the provision of quality instruction and are based on the teacher effectiveness literature.

The second set of qualities includes those clinical qualities that are germane only to the student teacher-cooperating teacher relationship. The execution of these performance criteria are considered absolute prerequisites to providing a quality experience to student teachers. The concepts for the twenty clinical competencies are outlined below. They encompass six operational areas: role awareness, human relations, management and organization, gradual induction into full responsibility,

differentiated instruction, and evaluation and analysis of teaching.

I. Role Awareness

- A. Ethical responsibilities
- B. Teacher's influence
- C. Non-instructional duties

II. Human Relations

- A. Personal qualities
- B. Acceptance of student teachers
- C. Sharing relationship

III. Management and Organizations

- A. Functional physical environment
- B. Daily routines and procedures
- C. Discipline techniques

IV. Gradual Induction into Full Responsibility

- A. Transition from university
- B. Aspects of student teaching experiences
- C. Planning
- D. Teaching responsibilities

V. Differentiated Instruction

- A. Scope and sequence of curriculum
- B. Knowledge of students
- C. Planning
- D. Diagnosis
- E. Instructional guidelines

VI. Evaluation and Analysis of Teaching

- A. Ongoing evaluation
- B. Self-evaluation

Beginning on page 8 is the complete listing of the clinical competencies and behavioral statements describing how each competency

manifested. The operational areas in and of themselves are not revolutionary nor are the twenty competencies discoveries. What is distinctive is the list of behavioral indicators for each competency. It is one thing to list a set of competencies but another matter entirely to inform teachers how a particular competency is manifested with a student teacher. It is hoped this effort will advance the understanding of the exact role of the cooperating teacher in the student teaching program by detailing how cooperating teachers provide a quality experience for student teachers.

CONCLUSION

The selection and retention of superior cooperating teachers is at the root of quality experiences for student teachers. The identification of those unique competencies and behavioral indicators necessary to deliver quality student teaching experiences is crucial. Presently, many states are in the process of certifying cooperating teachers on the basis of years of service, advanced degrees, or completion of a supervision course (6). However, these qualifications do not necessarily equate with effectiveness in working with student teachers. This manuscript represents an effort at delineating performance criteria of superior cooperating teachers as perceived by practicing superior cooperating teachers themselves. It is hoped that by linking performance criteria to the conceptualization of the cooperating teacher role, less ambiguity and more consistency of anticipated outcomes will be achieved in the student teaching period.

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CLINICAL COMPETENCY - BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS OF COOPERATING TEACHERS

KNOWLEDGE AREA: Role Awareness

COMPETENCY: Instills within the student teacher the ethical responsibilities of the teaching profession.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

THE COOPERATING TEACHER:

1. Demonstrates a commitment to the students and to the teaching profession.
2. Encourages the student teacher to participate in advanced courses, inservices, workshops, PTA, and other professional meetings.
3. Instills a desire to stay abreast of current educational information concerning subject content and teaching trends by sharing new materials, professional journals and legislation.
4. Emphasizes the confidentiality of student information.
5. Maintains a positive working relationship with colleagues, other school personnel, and parents.
6. Discusses and demonstrates appropriate teacher-pupil relationships.

COMPETENCY: Helps the student teacher develop an awareness of a teacher's influences upon individual students.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

THE COOPERATING TEACHER:

1. Sets an appropriate example to the student teacher in behavior, personal appearance, speech, and appropriate mannerisms in school and in the community.
2. Sets an example for the student teacher by dealing with all students in a fair and honest manner.
3. Explains the impact of negative or positive comments on students.
4. Helps the student teacher in the development of good judgment in discussing or presenting controversial topics.
5. Helps the student teacher to display a love of learning by sharing personal interests with the students.

COMPETENCY: Helps the student teacher recognize the non-instructional duties of a teacher.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

THE COOPERATING TEACHER:

1. Stresses the importance of accurately and promptly keeping necessary records.
2. Encourages willingness to work with students in extra-curricular activities (e.g. clubs, organizations, etc.).
3. Stresses the necessity of assuming duties assigned by the administration (i.e. lunch, hall, bus, etc.).
4. Discusses the importance of being available for parent conferences.
5. Guides the student teacher in developing appropriate communication between home and school.
6. Shares duties and responsibilities with the student teacher.

KNOWLEDGE AREA: Human Relations

COMPETENCY: Possesses positive personal qualities.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

THE COOPERATING TEACHER:

1. Demonstrates effective character traits such as enthusiasm, consideration, patience, dependability, maturity of judgement, and resourcefulness.
2. Exhibits a sense of humor.
3. Demonstrates efficient use of time.
4. Uses common sense.
5. Stresses the importance of maintaining health and vitality.
6. Discusses ways to adapt to changes or disruptions in the routine.

COMPETENCY: Accepts student teacher as co-worker.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

THE COOPERATING TEACHERS:

1. Demonstrates confidence in the student teacher by considering her judgments and suggestions as important.
2. Encourages student teacher to take initiative and make decisions.
3. Creates a supportive atmosphere by introducing student teacher to the class as another teacher.
4. Accepts student teachers as an individual.
5. Communicates to the student teacher that the experience will be a learning situation for both of you.

COMPETENCY: Develops a sharing relationship with student teacher.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

THE COOPERATING TEACHER:

1. Shares personal background and educational philosophies.
2. Shares teaching materials, ideas, strategies, and disciplinary techniques.
3. Helps student teacher start her own collection of ideas and materials.

KNOWLEDGE AREA: Management and Organization

COMPETENCY: Aids the student teacher in developing and maintaining a functional physical environment.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

THE COOPERATING TEACHER:

1. Shows the student teacher how to organize time, space, materials, and equipment for meeting instructional goals.
2. Explains ways to arrange the classroom to meet the physical and emotional needs of the students.

COMPETENCY: Helps the student teacher implement efficient daily routines and procedures.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

THE COOPERATING TEACHER:

1. Helps the student teacher establish procedures and routines that are easily followed and that minimize disorder and wasted time.
2. Provides examples of transition from one activity to another.
3. Impresses upon student teacher the importance of having all materials ready and available for every activity.
4. Helps the student teacher follow school-mandated procedures.
5. Explains procedures for getting students on-task.

COMPETENCY: Provides student teacher with a repertoire of effective discipline techniques.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

THE COOPERATING TEACHER:

1. Clearly states, explains, and demonstrates classroom and campus rules to student teacher.
2. Acquaints student teacher with alternative discipline techniques.
3. Helps the student teacher determine reasonable standards of behavior.
4. Demonstrates a variety of positive and negative verbal and nonverbal reinforcers and helps the student teacher achieve a desirable balance between them.
5. Helps the student teacher detect misbehavior in its early stages and prevent little problems from developing into big ones.

KNOWLEDGE AREA: Gradual Induction Into Full Responsibility

COMPETENCY: Assists the student teacher in making the transition from university student to student teacher.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

THE COOPERATING TEACHER:

1. Becomes familiar with student teacher's background by reading biographical data or by personal contact.
2. Explains to the children that the student teacher is another teacher in the classroom.
3. Gives the student teacher a sense of belonging by providing a a desk and materials of her own.

COMPETENCY: Introduces the student teacher to important aspects of the student teaching experience.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

THE COOPERATING TEACHER:

1. Acquaints the student teacher with the building, faculty, staff and students at the beginning of student teaching.
2. Explains general school policies, rules, and regulations to the student teacher.
3. Familiarizes the student teacher with classroom routines, daily schedule, seating arrangement and students' names.
4. Openly discusses personal preferences concerning the teaching-learning environment.
5. Informs the student teacher of the children who require special understanding.
6. Shares techniques for developing a positive environment.

COMPETENCY: Plans and confers with student teacher.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

THE COOPERATING TEACHER:

1. Takes time throughout the day to discuss problems that arise.
2. Uses conference time to develop a tentative schedule for assumption of responsibilities.

COMPETENCY: Facilitates gradual induction of the student teacher into teaching responsibilities.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

THE COOPERATING TEACHER:

1. Provides the student teacher with opportunities to observe specific aspects of teacher behaviors such as teaching strategies and management techniques.
2. Permits the student teacher to assist with routine tasks and instruction (i.e. passing out materials, taking roll, collecting lunch money, or helping an individual student).
3. Arranges for the student teacher to participate in the instructional program through team teaching (i.e. instruct small groups, introduce or conclude a lesson, plan for reteaching).
4. Allows the student teacher to assume responsibility for a single subject or period.
5. Assists the student teacher in gradually teaching additional subjects or periods until full responsibility is assumed.
6. Capitalizes on student teacher's special interests and talents.

KNOWLEDGE AREA: Differentiated Instruction

COMPETENCY: Familiarizes the student teacher with the scope and sequence of the curriculum.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

THE COOPERATING TEACHER:

1. Introduces the student teacher to state and local scope and sequence charts.
2. Explains the curriculum guide and stresses its integration with planning.

COMPETENCY: Helps the student teacher become knowledgeable about students.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

THE COOPERATING TEACHERS:

1. Helps the student teacher understand the characteristics and needs of students at a given age or developmental level.
2. Demonstrates how to utilize knowledge about students in motivating and working with them.
3. Shares relevant background information about individual students.
4. Provides techniques for communicating on students level of understanding.
5. Models ways to promote positive self-concept in the learner.

COMPETENCY: Helps the student teacher understand and participate in the planning process.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

THE COOPERATING TEACHER:

1. Shares planning purposes and procedures with the student teacher.
2. Allows the student teacher to assist with planning.
3. Guides the student teacher in making her own plans.
4. Helps student teacher visualize how individual lessons are scheduled into the total program.
5. Acquaints the student teacher with beginning and end of the year procedures.

COMPETENCY: Aids the student teacher in developing skills in diagnosis.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

THE COOPERATING TEACHER:

1. Discusses and demonstrates formal and informal testing instruments and techniques used with students.
2. Shows student teacher how to analyze available data.
3. Demonstrates how to use data in initial and corrective planning and teaching.
4. Explains the importance of continual diagnosis during the year.
5. Discusses the referral process for special programs.

COMPETENCY: Explains guidelines for effective instruction.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

THE COOPERATING TEACHER:

1. Demonstrates use of direct instruction in teaching basic skills.
2. Demonstrates problem solving and inquiry teaching approaches.
3. Models a variety of teaching approaches to accomplish objectives.
4. Discusses various methods and purposes for grouping.
5. Familiarizes the student teacher with available materials and resources.
6. Assists the student teacher in becoming proficient in pacing by reviewing specific lessons.
7. Discusses the process of corrective instruction.

KNOWLEDGE AREA: Evaluation and Analysis of Teaching

COMPETENCY: Provides ongoing evaluation of the student teacher's performance.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

THE COOPERATING TEACHER:

1. Clearly defines the management and instructional requirements and expectations of the student teacher.
2. Provides prompt feedback on specific strengths and weaknesses of daily lessons and procedures.
3. Uses a variety of techniques to analyze student teacher performance, such as oral and written feedback, audio tapes, and various coding schemes.
4. Constructively critiques every lesson plan at least two days before presentation and each unit plan at last one week prior to implementation.
5. Offers and/or demonstrates specific alternatives or additional suggestions for the student teacher to implement.
6. Avoids verbalizing negative comments to the student teacher in front of others (students, teachers, parents, etc.).

COMPETENCY: Communicates the value of continous self-evaluaton.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

THE COOPERATING TEACHER:

1. Sets an example by analyzing one's own instruction in relation to the elements of effective teaching.
2. Shows willingness to accept comments or suggestions about one's performance from district supervisor.
3. Acquaints the student teacher with district teacher evaluation procedures.